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ABSTRACT

Findings and recommendations of a University of Alberta task force study on the mature student are presented. Study objectives were as follows: to identify the characteristics of the mature student population at the university, to identify major concerns and needs of this population, to determine to what extent the university meets the needs of the mature student, and to survey the support mechanisms for mature students in the general community. The following institutional problems are examined: obtaining preadmission information; obtaining information from faculty offices; academic counseling; support services (library, offices, bookstore); choice of evening courses; residency requirements; registration; transfer of credits; credit by special assessment; parking; and study space. Situational problems are also covered: time pressures; balancing multiple responsibilities; finances; child care; lack of encouragement from family and peers; disruption of family life; and lack of peer group contact. In addition, the following academic concerns are addressed: examinations, essay writing, study habits, skill improvement, and upgrading and remediation. A bibliography and study questionnaires are appended. (SW)

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The Senate
The University of Alberta

Report of the Task Force on Mature Students

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June 1983

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R E P O R T

TASK FORCE ON MATURE STUDENTS

SENATE MANDATE

The Senate of The University of Alberta is an investigative and advisory body whose members are drawn from both the University and the public, and whose primary function under the Universities Act (1976) is "to enquire into any matter that might tend to enhance the usefulness of the University".

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

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Many people assisted the Task Force by sharing their knowledge and viewpoints about issues affecting mature students. Our sincere appreciation is extended to those who were interviewed, who presented briefs, who participated in discussion, who responded to questionnaires, or who assisted in other ways.

Your contribution to this report is gratefully acknowledged.

Special thanks to the staff of The Senate Office, and in particular to Judith Goldsand whose patience and expertise were invaluable to the members of the Task Force.

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P R E A M B L E

MATURE STUDENTS: PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

For many years it has been assumed that the undergraduate population at university is made up primarily of young men and women just emerged from high school. The major exception was the immediate post-war period from 1945 - 1950. Accordingly, standardized systems of registration, admissions and course scheduling have been structured with this group in mind.

In recent years a change in enrolment patterns has become evident. In 1981 - 82, more than one quarter of the full-time student body at The University of Alberta was 25 years of age or older.

Recognition of this trend prompted The Senate of The University of Alberta to establish a Task Force to explore issues of concern to mature students and the implications for the university of this substantial number of non-traditional students.

In the ensuing study Task Force members have become increasingly aware of the potential benefits to the university which the presence of such large numbers of mature students on campus represents. Mature students have problems, as our study has discovered; they can even create problems for the university. On the other hand their maturity, experience and obvious commitment to the educational process represent a significant asset. Their presence in the classroom can enrich the experience of professors and students alike. The purpose of the Task Force study has been to identify concerns and problems, point to solutions and to sensitize all concerned to the needs of mature students.

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The year was 1981. Senate members were advised that students of 25 years of age and over constituted more than one quarter of the new registrants at this university, a fact which prompted interest in the older student. Questions were raised about who these students were; what were they studying; and how they differed from the traditional 18 to 21 year old student population.

It was recognized that social changes during the past 20 years, such as the rise in the median age of the North American population, the technological advances demanding retraining and continuing education, and the influences of the women's movement all have contributed to the influx of older students to university campuses.

Certain philosophical beliefs have had impact on the large increase in numbers of mature students at universities. Today's society has acknowledged that individuals of any age should have access to educational opportunities to enhance their interests and talents. A university education has come to be seen as a lifelong process involving periodic retraining and continuing education, rather than as a postsecondary school progression. In all probability, the numbers of older students at universities will continue to increase in years to come.

The Senate, with its mandate to enquire into any matter which might tend to enhance the usefulness of the university, deemed it important to explore the issues and concerns of mature students and

the implications for the university of having such large numbers of non-traditional students enrolled.

The Task Force on Mature Students was established by The Senate of The University of Alberta and commenced work in May of 1982. The nine member group includes six members of The Senate, two members of The University of Alberta faculty and one representative from Athabasca University.

A definition of "mature student" and suggested terms of reference were developed by a 1981 ad hoc committee to set the parameters for the study. With some later revision by the Task Force, the definition and terms of reference were approved by The Senate.

1.2 DEFINITION OF MATURE STUDENT

Definition of the term "mature student" posed particular difficulties. The Task Force found that many Canadian universities have a special category for what is called a "mature student". The term usually describes a special entry category for applicants who lack the regular admission requirements.

Age requirements for this category vary considerably throughout Canada: minimum age for "mature student" admission at the University of Lethbridge is 19; at the University of Calgary, 21; the University of Saskatchewan, 20; Simon Fraser University, 23; Concordia University, 20.

Concordia University adds the criterion of having been away from full-time study for a time; Simon Fraser designates as "mature students" only those over 23 years who are not eligible for admission in another category.

Within The University of Alberta, a variety of age levels and criteria are used for special consideration as a "mature student": General Faculties Council designates age 21 as the minimum age for admission in the "non-matriculated adult" category, the Faculty of Law has special criteria for admission of "mature students" of age 30 or over, and Housing and Food Services sets a minimum age of 21 years for assignment of "mature student" accommodation, and the Office of Student Affairs uses 25 years of age to designate students as "mature".

The Task Force in its investigation has used the following definition of "mature student":

> "All students aged 25 years or over and all non-matriculated adult students who are enrolled in a credit course or program at The University of Alberta".

The fact that the study is limited to those in credit programs is not meant to imply that credit programs are more important than non-credit. The University of Alberta non-credit courses offered through the Faculty of Extension appear to exhibit a good deal of flexibility and adaptation to student needs. The major concern of the Task Force is with those individuals who may have difficulty working within the credit structure.

It was expected that certain groups within this broad definition might experience particular problems. The part-time or the graduate student who combines work and study might have problems different from those of the full-time undergraduate student. However, other difficulties might be commonly experienced by older students primarily because of age, or time spent away from formal study. Therefore, the Task Force felt that its investigation should examine the needs of both part-time and full-time, and graduate as well as undergraduate students.

1.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the Task Force are as follows:

[1] To collect data about the nature of the mature student population at The University of Alberta.

[2] To identify major concerns and special needs of the mature student.

[3] To decide which issues warrant further investigation.

[4] To determine to what extent The University of Alberta meets the needs of the mature student with regard to these issues.

[5] To survey the support mechanisms for mature students in the general community.

[6] To make recommendations.

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

A Senate Task Force study and the ensuing report is not by its nature a scientific or statistically based work. Although statistics were gathered, the investigation was restricted to some extent by the unavailability of certain statistical information. Despite the willing co-operation of the Office of the Registrar, data to help answer specific questions were not available. For example, it was not possible to select for a survey those University of Alberta students 25 years of age and over who have been away from formal study for at least 2 years; nor to determine the numbers of students who are turned away from Spring or Summer session courses.

Difficulty was also encountered in Task Force attempts to verify an impression that there are many individuals in the community who wish to come to university but do not get here. Notwithstanding the off-campus advertising and inquiries, only a few of the submissions addressed this issue. The questionnaire to the "unclassified students", a new category which waives compliance with regular admission requirements, represents an attempt to obtain this kind of information.

The recommendations in this report therefore are based not only on statistical data and results of surveys done by questionnaires, but also on impressions. These impressions were derived from a number of sources: the day to day experience of some Task Force members who deal with mature students, the numerous briefs received, communication with counsellors in Student Services, formal and casual conversations with mature students and members' reactions to the operational systems of the university. The Task

Force feels, however, that the conclusions which have been drawn accurately reflect reality, and that the recommendations in the report are based on considerable thought and discussion.

1.5 PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES

Discussion of the many issues brought to the Task Force raised numerous other questions or problems, many of which could not be answered or were considered beyond the mandate of the Task Force. There are no easy answers to these questions but they certainly call for widespread deliberation by the university community.

The issues raised include the following:

[1] What responsibility should a university have to make special arrangements for certain groups of students and, in particular, mature students and part-time students?

[2] How does a university provide greater accessibility without threatening the integrity of its degrees?

[3] What responsibility should a university have to provide courses for university readiness?

[4] Do changing trends in social patterns of society require changes in the education structure in such areas as residency requirements, prerequisites, credit for previous work experience and non-university studies?

Each of these questions could generate a lengthy debate beyond the scope of this report and the Task Force believes it is timely for the university to address these issues. The decisions arising from consideration of these questions would provide direction for university policies and programs for mature students.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

Beginning in May of 1982, early meetings of the Task Force were devoted to the development of a meaningful and workable operational plan for the investigation. Inquiries were sent to other Canadian universities for their perspectives and information about special programs for mature students.

At the same time a subcommittee conducted a literature search of Canadian and American sources to provide members with a selection of background material for study. Approximately 50 articles relating to mature students were made available to Task Force members. A bibliography appears in Appendix A.

In August a survey questionnaire was developed to learn about some of the expectations and difficulties of mature students who were first time registrants at The University of Alberta. The Office of Student Affairs facilitated distribution by sending the questionnaire with its invitation to all incoming mature students to attend the Mature Student Orientation Sessions. Of the 500 questionnaires sent, 160 were returned. A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix B.

The Task Force made an effort to reach as many people as possible for input: mature students themselves, faculty members at the university, individuals who had previously been mature students, and individuals who may have desired a university education but who for various reasons did not attend.

Letters were sent to all Deans asking them to circulate information about the Task Force and to encourage faculty members to either write briefs or arrange to speak with Task Force members. Articles asking for views and opinions were placed in university newspapers including the Gateway, the Summer Times and Folio, as well as in publications of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Grant MacEwan Community College, Athabasca University, and the Edmonton Examiner. Letters were sent to a number of student associations, local organizations and community groups concerned with education, and to a selection of public and private colleges in the Edmonton region. The Chairman and a member of the Task Force were interviewed on radio, and members of the Task Force spoke at the Mature Student Orientation Sessions. In addition, letters were sent to Deans of all faculties requesting information about specific policies with regard to mature students.

Responses to these requests included written briefs from seven student associations or students, from thirteen university faculty members, and from eleven other individuals or community groups. From September to December, Task Force representatives met with 33 individuals or groups including students, faculty members, counsellors, teachers, and educational administrators. A list of individuals and groups who submitted written briefs appears in Appendix C. In addition, Task Force members attended two Brown Bag Lunch meetings for mature students where they had the opportunity to hear

the viewpoints of approximately 30 students. A number of telephone responses to our newspaper advertisements provided useful information as well. Many members of the university staff assisted the Task Force by responding to innumerable specific inquiries.

In February 1983 a more extensive questionnaire was sent to a sample of university students aged 25 years and over, in order to learn more about the nature of the mature student population on this campus, and about the expectations and difficulties they had experienced. There were 222 responses to the 500 questionnaires distributed. (Copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix B).

In a further attempt to gain information from what was seen to be an important group - those who desired a university education but who for various reasons did not enroll in a degree program - a third questionnaire was sent to all unclassified students at the university. "Unclassified student" is a new category which permits individuals to enrol in certain courses without having to comply with the usual registration procedures or admission requirements. One hundred and forty-nine responses were received to the 300 questionnaires distributed.

Throughout the year members of the Task Force met regularly to analyze and discuss the responses to the questionnaires and the information gained from the written briefs, letters, interviews and meetings.

The Task Force was particularly pleased with the co-operation and assistance provided by The University of Alberta faculty and staff.

CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE MATURE STUDENT POPULATION

AT

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MATURE STUDENT POPULATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Interviews with mature students and responses to the survey in the Fall of 1982 provided members of the Task Force with some understanding of the various difficulties experienced by older students. A more comprehensive questionnaire was sent in February of 1983 to a sample of 500 students, 25 years of age and over, in all years of study.

Questionnaire #2 generated a good deal of information about mature students at The University of Alberta. It is not the intention of the Task Force to provide in this report a detailed statistical summary of all of the data collected. Rather, the discussion in Chapter 2 will focus primarily on a description of the characteristics of the mature student population at The University of Alberta. Certain groupings within the total sample were examined in order to determine if any differences could be found between male and female, married and unmarried, graduate and undergraduate or part-time and full-time students.

Of the 21,012 full-time intramural students registered for The University of Alberta Winter Session in 1983, approximately 5,500 were 25 years of age or older, with 4,500 of those between the ages of 25 and 34. Part-time intramural students in the same Session numbered 3,440, with 2,700 aged 25 and over. This was reflected in the findings of questionnaire #2, with the majority of respondents in the age range from 25 to 35 years.

Only about 10% of students responding were over the age of 40, with a larger proportion of married women in the 35 and over group. The sample included more females (56%) than males (44%), and over 75% of all respondents indicated that they had come to the university directly from full-time employment. Another 14% were employed part-time. Only 8% indicated they had come directly from full-time roles in the home. Two-thirds reported that they were married or cohabiting, and 75% indicated that they had home responsibilities that extended beyond themselves. About 40% of the total group indicated that they had children at home but most were of school age.

Despite the present troubled economy, over 50% of mature students reported that they were experiencing no financial difficulties. About 10% indicated that finances were a problem at some point, but that their problems had been resolved. Since so many had come from full-time employment, most reported that the individual total family income had been reduced as a result of the respondent returning to university. Yet even with that loss of income the students reported relatively high family incomes. Just under 30% indicated that their current level of personal or family income was below $15,000. Over 50% reported a current level of family income above $25,000.

The majority of mature students are attending the university full-time and are doing so in order to prepare themselves for better positions in the workforce. Most are in undergraduate degree programs in the three larger faculties, Arts, Science or Education. Moreover, they indicated that they were achieving Grade Point Averages that were average or above average, and the majority indicated that they were doing as well as they expected or even better in their university studies.

In analyzing sex differences and marital status of the sample, the majority of the undergraduate mature students were found to be women, while the majority of graduate students were men. This pattern was also reported in a recent study of undergraduate and graduate enrollments carried out by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.

Most married men in the sample reported that they held full-time jobs, while more married women reported part-time jobs along with many home responsibilities.

About 50% of the respondents reported having children. More men than women indicated that they had children of preschool age. For the most part women reported more children of school age. Apparently women are more likely to wait for the children to go to school before entering or returning to university.

Use of the term "mature student" to refer to the category of admission for non-matriculated adults has unfortunately contributed to the assumption that large numbers of older students enter the university with less than the normal admission requirements. The analysis did not substantiate this belief since it was found that only 6% of the students responding to the questionnaire had entered the university by this route. Responses indicated that a majority of mature students not only had matriculation standing,* but some postsecondary studies as well, before attending The University of Alberta. However, of

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*"matriculation" - specified program of high school courses which are required for university entrance

students who did enter the university as non-matriculated adults, the majority were single women. Given traditional schooling patterns, this finding should not be surprising since many women may have completed high school in non-matriculation programs which do not meet university entrance requirements.

Taking into account all of the responses, it appears that the mature students as a whole did not experience a great many problems, or if problems were experienced, with time they were resolved. The total group, however, identified time pressures and balancing multiple responsibilities as two overriding problems very difficult to resolve. Furthermore, certain sub-groups of mature students experienced particular problems which are discussed in the following chapter.

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY MATURE STUDENTS:

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY MATURE STUDENTS:

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Questionnaire #2 listed a number of possible problem areas that might present special difficulties for the mature student. The problems, which were drawn from interviews with mature students, submissions, or the literature on the subject, were categorized as institutional, situational, academic and attitudinal. This chapter will briefly discuss the specific problems considered, the reponses of students to the questionnaire, and in some instances, make recommendations.

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

The problems identified as institutional are those pertaining to things within the university's direct influence. Having identified the potential problem, the questionnaire asked students to respond within the context of three categories: (a) that the problem was an ongoing one; (b) that it had been a problem but was resolved; and (c) was never a problem.

3.1.1 Obtaining Pre-admission Information

Although the majority of our respondents indicated that they had no difficulty getting pre-admission information, 30% did indicate that they had experienced problems. While the questionnaire did not inquire into specific problems encountered, interviews and briefs provided some details.

Some students experienced difficulties locating a place where most of their questions could be answered. They expressed frustration at being sent from place to place, or receiving conflicting information from different sources. It may be that some of these difficulties will be alleviated, now that the Student Access Centre

has been established in the Office of the Registrar. Still, large numbers of students and shortages of staff may prevent some mature students from receiving the personalized time and attention they require.

3.1.2 Obtaining Information from Faculty Offices

About 65% of our respondents indicated that they had not encountered any difficulties in getting information from faculty offices. Of the 35% who had problems, over half had resolved their difficulties. Undergraduate students reported more problems than graduate students. While there is no comparable data available, it would appear that the mature student does not have any more problems in this area than the traditional younger university student.

3.1.3 Academic Counselling

About 25% of the mature students cited inadequate academic counselling (assistance with program planning) as a continuing problem, and the figures were about the same for both the undergraduate and graduate students. Full-time students seemed to experience more problems than part-time students.

Academic counselling is a joint faculty/department responsibility. While the ACCESS centre provides initial information, forms, and counselling about admission requirements, when students require detailed information about a faculty or course they have to be directed to the appropriate faculty or department. Some faculties and departments do not have the time to provide counselling on an individual basis, and others may do so only at certain times of the year. Concerns in this area are discussed more fully in Section 4.3.2. of the report.

3.1.4 Support Services (Library, Offices, Bookstore)

Approximately 35% of the total sample indicated that the hours of operation of the library, offices and the bookstore were inadequate, and that there were problems obtaining books and materials. Moreover, almost all students reporting problems indicated that they were ongoing. A greater proportion (almost 50%) of part-time students indicated that they had continuing problems with access to support services and materials. This finding is in keeping with the comments received during the interviews, and the problems noted in reviewing the literature.

A large number of part-time students combining employment and study are on campus at various times of day on tight time schedules. Yet most of the university's services have remained open only during normal working hours.

The Task Force is pleased to see that student counselling is available one evening per week, that the bookstore is open Saturday mornings, and that the library recently has expanded the hours of operation. Efforts should be made by all support services to adapt to the needs of the increasing numbers of part-time students.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE HOURS OF OFFICES AND CAMPUS SERVICES SHOULD BE EXTENDED BEYOND THEIR PRESENT HOURS TO INCLUDE THE NOON HOUR AND AT LEAST ONE EVENING A WEEK WITH APPROPRIATE CO-ORDINATION, PUBLICITY, AND SECURITY MEASURES. ADDITIONAL COSTS MIGHT BE AVOIDED BY ADOPTION OF A FLEXIBLE TIME SCHEDULE.

3.1.5 Choice of Courses in the Evening

Although the majority of the mature student population attends daytime classes, a substantial number (about 35%) attends in the late afternoon or evening. Graduate students in particular, and part-time students as well, found the lack of choice in evening courses to be a real problem. In submissions to the Task Force a number of part-time students referred particularly to this difficulty. Prior to 1971, evening courses at the University of Alberta came under the jurisdiction of the Office of Special Sessions with separate hiring and remuneration arrangements for evening instructors. Beginning in 1971-72, the on-campus evening courses were integrated into the regular sessions with the intention of giving Departments more flexibility to distribute courses and regular faculty in a manner more favorable to students. While the intent of this action may have been to respond to changing student needs, in fact this has not happened.

Budgetary restrictions and the obvious preference for most faculty members to teach during daytime hours have contributed to a situation in which opportunities for evening study have decreased. The needs of the increasing numbers of students who wish to study part-time and outside of the traditional hours, should be given more consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

AS THE ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DAY DICTATE THAT MORE AND MORE STUDENTS MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR OWN SUPPORT, THE NEED FOR ALTERNATE CLASS TIMES BECOMES IMPERATIVE. THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE ISSUE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF EVENING CREDIT COURSES ON CAMPUS SHOULD BE EXAMINED BY THE UNIVERSITY.

3.1.6. Residency Requirements

Inflexible regulations regarding residency requirements were a greater problem for the graduate students than for undergraduate students in our sample. Similarly, the part-time students more often reported that rigid residency requirements were a difficulty. The Task Force recognizes that in some cases, residency requirements are important for continuity of learning or a particular field of study. Residency requirements, however, can be a real barrier to university for students combining work and study, especially for those who at later stages of their lives are returning to education.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT FACULTIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA RE-EXAMINE THEIR RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS, AND CONSIDER WHAT CHANGES WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE ACADEMICALLY YET COULD BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS.

3.1.7 Registration

More students reported difficulties with registration than any other issue except parking. The Task Force was not surprised by this finding since it is a well known fact that students feel that The University of Alberta registration procedures are time-consuming and frustrating. More part-time students reported problems, a fact that also may be attributed to the hours of operation, even though there is some extension of hours during registration period. The Task Force endorses the efforts being made by the Office of the Registrar to move toward a system of continuous registration.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT ALL EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SIMPLIFIED AND FLEXIBLE SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION FOR ALL STUDENTS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS.

3.1.8 Transfer of Credits

While 80% of respondents indicated that they had had no difficulty with the transfer of credits from other institutions, those reporting a problem indicated that it was an ongoing one. More part-time students seem to have difficulty with the transfer of credit issue than do the full-time students. Similarly, as a group, more female respondents indicated problems in this area. A University Committee on Admissions and Transfer with representation from each faculty works with the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer to facilitate transferability among the postsecondary institutions within the province. Interprovincial transfers of credit create special problems, and it is not uncommon for students who have moved a good deal to spend five or six years completing a three year degree program. Given the high mobility of society today, the issue of credit transfer will require ongoing attention.

3.1.9. Credit by Special Assessment

In a case where a student cannot obtain credit for previous studies, or feels that he/she has considerable knowledge of the subject matter of a course, one option may be credit by special assessment. "Credit by Special Assessment" was developed by The University of Alberta to provide a means whereby a student may obtain credit for knowledge which may have been gained through independent study or work experience. Some faculties have agreed to allow students, once they have been admitted to the university, to seek credit in certain specified courses without actually registering in and taking the courses, if they can demonstrate an acceptable level of mastery of the course content. Faculties in consultation with departments determine which, if any, of their course credits

may be earned by special assessment, and the methods of doing so.

The University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing informed the Task Force that faculty members are committed to the development of "challenge examinations" in nine courses during the forthcoming year. These examinations will be designed to measure achievement in the subject matter of the course. The assessment of prior learning and how to give it credit recognition is one of the major areas of study of the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL), an international education association with 700 participating institutions in North America. As mature students come to universities in increasing numbers, the recognition of prior learning is an issue which will demand further attention.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT FOR APPROPRIATE COURSES, FACULTIES GIVE INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF METHODS TO ASSESS AND GIVE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING.

3.1.10 Parking

Over 50% of respondents in the study indicated that they experienced ongoing difficulties with parking, a well recognized problem on the University of Alberta campus. The problem may be more severe for the mature student who has to balance employment and family responsibilities while trying to deal with the issue of getting to and from the campus. Approximately 1,700 parking spaces were available in 1982 for rent by students. In general, the distance a student lives from campus and availability of public transit are the factors used to determine priorities. Special consideration however, is given to students who can demonstrate a special need. Criteria take into account many of the issues of concern to mature students, and include the following:

1. single or working parents who must transport children to schools and daycare centres

2. mature students with full time employment

3. students with a part time job, who claim they must work to finance their education

It is a policy of the University of Alberta to encourage the use of public transportation, and ongoing efforts are being made to have the University served eventually by a rapid transit system.

3.1.11 Study Space

Fewer graduate students reported a problem with study space, a fact which undoubtedly reflects the efforts made by departments to see that the students have some kind of space if only to meet the requirements of graduate assistantships. The undergraduate students who did report a problem indicated that it was ongoing. The Chief Librarian informed the Task Force that adult students use the library more extensively than younger students, both for reference and as a quiet place to study away from family distractions.

RECOMMENDATION

TO MEET THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR QUIET STUDY SPACE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE UNIVERSITY CONSIDER DESIGNATING EMPTY CLASSROOMS AS EVENING STUDY ROOMS, AND MAKE CREATIVE USE OF OTHER SPACES ON CAMPUS NOT NORMALLY UTILIZED FOR STUDY. LOCATIONS SHOULD BE WELL-PUBLICIZED, e.g. IN THE STUDENTS' UNION HANDBOOK, THE INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR MATURE STUDENTS AND THE GATEWAY.

3.2 SITUATIONAL PROBLEMS

Situational problems are those which affect the lives of students, but which are outside of the university's direct influence.

3.2.1 Time Pressures

More than three-quarters of the respondents in all categories indicated that time pressures were a problem. Earlier analysis showed that many mature students have full or part-time jobs while at the same time being concerned with a number of family responsibilities. Both married and single women as well as part-time students indicated that time pressures represented an ongoing problem for them. For the adult student with a life space already crowded, the pressures of time make problems loom much larger than for a younger person with fewer constraints and responsibilities.

3.2.2 Balancing Multiple Responsibilities

Over 70% of mature students reported problems in balancing their multiple responsibilities. More graduate students, part-time students and women reported problems in this area. Married women students in particular cited this problem more often than the other groups. The married women had significant home responsibilities and in addition were often engaged in part-time employment as well as their studies. A mature student's time schedule is much less flexible than that of a younger student since the mature student is usually a person with an established lifestyle and many existing long-term commitments and restraints due to family, job, community and professional organizations. When hours and energy are spent coping with family responsibilities and employment, fewer resources are left for learning. There are not long uninterrupted periods of study time available, there is less freedom to get to the library when it is open, there is little time to talk with faculty members or to engage in out-of-class discussions with fellow students.

It is of particular importance that faculty members observe the General Faculties Council policy guidelines with respect to notification and definition of assignments (No. 113.1), and be sensitive to the multiple responsibilities and resultant pressures facing most mature students.

3.2.3 Finances

The Task Force findings indicated that many mature students attending university are in a relatively comfortable financial position, although a number of examples of financial hardships were cited.

In response to the questionnaire, more students in full-time studies reported financial difficulties as ongoing problems than did part-time students who were more likely to be working. Undergraduate students indicated financial problems more often than did graduate students, a factor that may be accounted for by the availability of assistantships and other kinds of work programs for graduate students on this campus. The Graduate Students' Association reported that even though 50% of graduate students received some support in this way, the amount was not enough to support them fully.

It appeared that as a group, mature women students at The University of Alberta come from families reporting relatively high levels of income, certainly higher than those reported for men. In looking at differences between married and unmarried persons, the unmarried students, both male and female, report more financial difficulties and substantially lower incomes than married students, especially those of married women. There was some indication that single women, especially those with children, had the most financial problems. Although a large proportion of the mature student population comes from a full-time employment situation, it is quite likely that the single women students do not have the same funds available when they start their program as do the single men students.

Many of the married men reported that they were continuing with full time employment while attending university. Married women students indicated more often than married men that they were experiencing financial problems. The Task Force in discussion explored some of the possible reasons for this difference. Since married women who were employed prior to coming to university indicated that they had contributed to the family income, discontinuance of their jobs could cause financial hardship. It is also possible that when the married woman, and in particular the married mother, returns or comes to university for the first time she is not available at home to engage in those activities which keep the family expenses down. There may be significantly higher costs, such as child care costs, associated with the woman leaving the home to go to university, than when the man attends.

The University's Women's Club of Edmonton which distributes close to $13,000 annually in bursaries and scholarships informed the Task Force that in its experience, the applicants in greatest need are single parents. If a single parent should be on welfare, it is almost impossible to pursue a university program. Although single parents may be eligible in a special-needs category for maintenance grants from the Alberta Students Finance Board, the maximum allowed is $6,000.

Part-time students, the majority of whom are women, have not been eligible for assistance under the Canada Student Loans program. However, the Federal Government has recently put forward proposals to make part-time students eligible for financial aid. The Alberta Students Finance Board does have small bursaries for part-time students to assist with tuition, books, babysitting and travel costs, the maximum being $300.

Some married women may have difficulty obtaining loans in their own right from the Students Finance Board since a spouse is expected to contribute to one's education. Older women who might qualify for loans may still have financial problems. Often they are reluctant to assume a heavy debt to finance their education because they are unclear about their future employment potential.

RECOMMENDATION

IF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IS TO BE READILY AVAILABLE TO MATURE PEOPLE IN THE GENERAL POPULATION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT CERTAIN GROUPS OF MATURE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE REAL FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND MAY NEED TO BE SINGLED OUT FOR FINANCIAL HELP.

LOANS, SCHOLARSHIPS, BURSARIES AND AWARDS FOR THE MATURE STUDENT AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE PART-TIME MATURE STUDENT APPEAR TO BE IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY. THE POLICIES OF BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH MEANS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT SHOULD BE REVIEWED, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME MATURE STUDENTS AS A SPECIALIZED GROUP.

3.2.4 Child Care

Ninety percent of respondents reported that the unavailability of child care facilities did not present a problem. Of the 10% who have the difficulty most indicated that the problem was an ongoing one. When married men and married women were compared, 12% more of the women had ongoing problems with child care availability than did the married men. This finding may help to explain why married women reported more financial problems than married men.

Again, this is an area in which a small proportion of the total group of mature students experience a significant problem. Some special assistance is provided to this group. Children of single parents are given priority for 50% of the places at The Students' Union and Community Day Care Centre which can accommodate 64 pre-school children, but which had, in January 1983, a waiting list of approximately 70 children.

3.2.5 Lack of Encouragement from Family and Peers

When the total population of graduate and undergraduate students was examined, it was found that 86% of that population did not experience difficulties in this area. That seemed to be true for both full-time and part-time students. What we did find, however, was that some 25% of the single women in our sample reported that they found lack of encouragement from family and peers to be a problem. With regard to married women, it was pointed out in the submission from Options For Women that even some supposedly supportive families are encouraging only if it means their own routines are not upset.

3.2.6 Disruption of Family Life

As might be expected, this issue was raised more often by married students than by single students. In particular, over 40% of married women in the sample indicated that this was an ongoing problem with which they had to contend. Equal numbers of undergraduates and graduates reported this difficulty, but more full-time than part-time students reported disruption of family life as an ongoing problem.

3.2.7 Lack of Peer Group Contact

About 40% of the students in our sample reported lack of peer group contact as a problem. Closer analysis showed that undergraduate mature students experienced this problem more often than did the graduate students. The graduate student population on the whole tends to include more mature students, and an age-peer group is usually in place within the university for graduate students. Full-time students reported lack of peer group contact as a problem more often than did part-time students.

Again this finding is not surprising when we consider that the part-time student comes to campus for classes only, and would probably have more contacts outside of the university setting. It is particularly noteworthy that women reported problems in this area more often than did the men students. About 35% of the women students, both married and single, indicated that lack of peer group contact was a problem for them. While a few more single men (24%) compared with the married men (20%) indicated some problems in this area, it obviously did not occur as often. Moreover, the single men were more likely to indicate this problem was resolved. Women students, both single and married, appeared to experience ongoing problems with feelings of isolation on campus. This undoubtedly explains why, in a later question, more women indicated that they would make use of any special services for mature students. In particular, the single woman student wants more support and institutional effort to help her deal with feelings of isolation.

3.3 ACADEMIC CONCERNS

In questionnaire #2, the third area of concern was identified as Academic, and focussed on those behaviors which might affect progress in one's studies, such as: writing examinations, essay writing and study habits. These are matters of special concern to the group of mature students who have been away from formal study for a time.

3.3.1 Examinations

Twenty seven percent of mature undergraduates regard examinations as a continuing problem. First and second year full-time mature students are the largest group with the difficulty. Single women, more than other groups, perceived problems in this area and indicated more often that they would like help in developing skills in writing examinations. In interviews, many older students said that their first encounter

with a multiple choice examination was particularly distressful since they were not familiar with the type of exam.

3.3.2 Essay Writing

Responses to the questionnaire showed that it was first and second year students who most often experienced difficulties with essay writing. While a larger proportion of single men reported problems, more of the single women indicated that they would make extensive use of seminars to develop essay writing skills. Many mature students do in fact have better writing skills than their younger counterparts, but lack experience in using the libraries as a resource. A brief from the Chief Librarian stated that in the early weeks of each university session, mature students take more staff time than other students because many are unfamiliar with methods of accessing information in a modern library.

3.3.3 Study Habits

Over 50% of the undergraduate students reported difficulty with studying, and 31% of the sample experience ongoing problems. Once again the difference between the undergraduate and graduate populations can be attributed to the fact that the graduate students have more experience with university studies. Part-time students indicated fewer problems than did full-time students. As in the case of the previous two academic concerns, the single students reported having more problems than the married students in the sample, and again the proportion of single men who have difficulty studying was somewhat greater than the single women.

3.3.4 Skill Improvement

To offer assistance to students who have been away from formal study for a time, both the Office of Student Affairs and Student Counselling

Services sponsor seminars at various times of the year on the improvement of study skills and essay writing skills. Attendance is voluntary and varies from session to session.

When mature students were asked in questionnaire #2 if they would use special seminars to help develop their study skills, essay writing skills and examination skills, once again it was the undergraduate students who endorsed these activities more than the graduate students. The single men were hesitant in committing themselves to using these services, indicating that they just "might use" them. This was interesting since it was the single men who reported lower Grade Point Averages and more problems with writing essays and studying in general. On the basis of the overall response, however, special skill improvement seminars for mature students would be of value to the majority of the students in the sample.

RECOMMENDATION

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR MATURE STUDENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE AND WELL PUBLICIZED PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SKILLS, TO BE DEVELOPED AND PRESENTED BY PROFESSIONALS IN EACH OF THE AREAS: EXAMINATIONS, ESSAY WRITING, USE OF LIBRARY, STUDY SKILLS, TIME MANAGEMENT.

3.3.5 Upgrading and Remediation

Many mature students have been away from studies for a time and require some upgrading or remediation.

The role and responsibility of the university in remediation and upgrading is a controversial issue. Remediation may be defined as study needed for the improvement of one's level of proficiency. It usually refers to additional help required by individuals who presumably have met the entrance requirements, but do not have the level of knowledge necessary for university work. Upgrading is study to fulfill

a matriculation equivalency. This term is often used in reference to an individual who has been away from studies for a time and who does not have the necessary admission requirements.

Within the university community there appear to be two schools of thought about this issue. One view is that if the university accepts students with less than university level qualifications, it has an obligation to provide remediation and upgrading. The contrary position is that a university should not admit students who are not qualified to do university level work.

At present some 100 level courses (language other than English, mathematics, biology, chemistry) fulfill the role of upgrading. Such courses are granted credit towards a degree in the Faculty of Arts but not in the Faculty of Science if the course was a faculty requirement for admission.

In 1982 The University of Alberta provided non-credit remediation programs in English and Mathematics. Of 2,600 students in first year mathematics courses in September 1982, 600 received a mark of less than 28% on a preliminary examination, and subsequently participated in the remediation program.

Just under 3,000 incoming students in 1982, in all faculties excluding Arts, Engineering and Agriculture, required English remediation. The Task Force was pleased to learn that, beginning in 1987, successful completion of a writing competency examination will be a requirement for admission to The University of Alberta.

It is the general position of the Task Force that the various faculties of the university should not be involved in upgrading or remediation. The majority of mature students responding to questionnaire #2 were of the same opinion. There presently exist a number of community resources which offer upgrading and remedial studies, for example: Alberta Vocational Centre, Alberta College, the Continuing Education Program of School Boards in Edmonton, and the Alberta Correspondence School.

3.3.5 Upgrading and Remediation (continued)

RECOMMENDATION

REMEDIATION AND UPGRADING SHOULD NOT BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY'S CREDIT FACULTIES AND, WHERE REQUIRED, SHOULD BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO ADMISSION TO A FACULTY. THE POTENTIAL FOR THE FACULTY OF EXTENSION TO EXPAND ITS REMEDIAL AND UPGRADING COURSES WITH A FOCUS ON THE NEEDS OF THE MATURE STUDENT SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED.

3.4 ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS

Attitudinal problems include those perceptions or attitudes which might affect academic performance, such as: lack of motivation, difficulty maintaining concentration, feelings of isolation, and lack of confidence.

3.4.1 Lack of Confidence

The undergraduate students reported lack of confidence as a factor in their academic performance more often than did graduate students. Similarly, more full-time students seemed to experience problems than part-time students. In both these instances the chief factor may be the general level of university experience of the student rather than anything related to age.

Lack of confidence was reported as a problem by 32% of the married women in the study, and by 22% of the single women. The respective figures for single and married men were 14% and 8%. This is an extremely interesting finding, since the women had reported higher grades than their male counterparts and were not as likely to indicate such special areas of concern as poor study skills and ability to write essays. A factor

that has been identified in a number of other studies may apply here: the general level of confidence of women mature students is lower than men mature students, which may explain why women in the study seemed to be looking for more support from the university community. An important question to ask is whether many mature women might not be deterred from attending the university because of that lack of confidence.

3.4.2 Attitudes Toward Mature Students

There is some indication from the literature survey and student interviews that some mature students have problems with professors who seem to treat them differently. The questionnaire responses do not support the contention that this problem exists at The University of Alberta. 85% of the sample reported no problems in this area, and another 5% reported that any problems they had experienced were resolved. The female married students seemed slightly more concerned about discriminatory attitudes, but the actual numbers did not appear to be significant.

RELATED ISSUES:

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4. RELATED ISSUES: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 ADMISSIONS

4.1.1 Alternate Routes of Entry for Mature Students

The great majority of older students enter the university in the traditional manner with the necessary matriculation prerequisites. In recent years other admission routes have developed in keeping with the university's policy of increasing accessibility.

A major philosophical question arises regarding admission to the university of mature students without the normal entrance requirements. The academic standards of the university are called squarely into question. On the one hand, the university is concerned about the abilities and knowledge of its applicants and is prepared to institute a writing competency examination as an additional admission requirement. On the other hand some remediation is offered within the university and certain 100 level courses are used to clear deficiencies in order to make a university education accessible to a wider range of the population. There is merit in the arguments for allowing non-matriculated adult students ready access to the university. However, university education is an expensive cost to society and there must be some prospect of success on the part of the candidate.

Information has been received from the Faculty of Arts that a non-program route for mature students including non-matriculated adults is being considered. However, a consistent, university-wide policy with the endorsement of all faculties is needed.

(a) Letter of Recommendation

A student who has completed one year of full-time study at another postsecondary institution in Alberta may gain entrance to The University of Alberta by a Letter of Recommendation from the Registrar of the institution attended. The student must be

recommended in writing by the sending institution as having satisfied the particular matriculation requirements of the chosen University of Alberta program. Inequities arise in that a person who has taken one year of a postsecondary program in Alberta may be eligible for admission, whereas a person who has taken a similar program elsewhere is not admissible.

(b) Non-matriculated Adult Category

A small number of students are admitted to the university in a non-matriculated adult category. The proportion of respondents to questionnaire #2 who indicated this status was 6%. Registration statistics in the Office of the Registrar do not indicate the numbers of students currently in this category. Once registered in a degree program, a student cannot be identified as a non-matriculated adult.

To receive consideration for admission in this category, an applicant must be at least 21 years of age. Otherwise, each faculty has its own criteria for evaluating the admissibility of non-matriculated adult students. In the Faculty of Science, applicants must have Math 30 plus two other sciences, with a minimum grade of 50% in each and an overall average of 60%. In the Faculty of Education, an applicant must present English 30 with a grade of 60% or better, one other matriculation subject, and an average of at least 60% in the two subjects. In the Faculty of Arts applicants need only provide background information and submit a brief essay to be considered, but the Faculty is currently reviewing admission requirements, particularly in the area of English competency.

The many variables in faculty and departmental requirements make it difficult for all Admissions staff to be knowledgeable about what may or may not be acceptable for admission as a non-matriculated adult. It takes determination and persistence for a student without the traditional matriculation requirements to find the most advantageous route for admission.

A number of non-matriculated adults gain admission to the Faculty of Arts with the express intention of transferring to the faculty of their choice after successful completion of one year in Arts. This may be a way of gaining entry to a quota faculty as well as to other non-quota faculties. There is some evidence that other faculties actively encourage non-matriculated adults to follow this route.

The alternative routes of entry to the university for mature students is an issue which the Task Force examined with special care. Applications to the university from mature students have increased yearly and show a diversity of educational backgrounds and a variety in terms of educational needs. In all likelihood, the numbers of mature students coming to university will continue to increase.

The Task Force believes it would be advantageous to both the university and mature students to have a route of admission with standardized first year requirements for all undergraduate faculties. It should accommodate mature students who may wish to take courses for interest or enrichment without commitment to a degree program, as well as the small number of mature students who do not meet normal admission requirements. In addition, it should assist mature students who may

wish to demonstrate a current level of competence prior to application to a quota faculty. A route of admission for mature students which would have standardized first year requirements should also simplify administrative aspects for the university.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE "NON-MATRICULATED ADULT" CATEGORY OF ADMISSION BE ABOLISHED.

2. THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE TERM "MATURE STUDENT" BE USED UNIFORMLY THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSITY TO APPLY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE 23 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER.

3. THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-PROGRAM ROUTE OF ADMISSION OPEN TO ALL MATURE STUDENTS; FOR EXAMPLE:

   - STUDENTS WHO MEET UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS BUT WHO MAY WISH TO TAKE COURSES PRIMARILY FOR INTEREST;
   - STUDENTS WHO MEET UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS BUT LACK SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A QUOTA FACULTY;
   - STUDENTS WHO DO NOT MEET THE UNIVERSITY'S ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS (AT PRESENT THE NON-MATRICULATED ADULTS).

   (a) CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE SHOULD BE A MINIMUM AGE OF 23 YEARS AND SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE ENGLISH COMPETENCY EXAMINATION.

   (b) THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE SHOULD PROVIDE A LIMITED NUMBER OF JUNIOR LEVEL COURSES (APPROXIMATELY 15-20 COURSES) WHICH WOULD REPRESENT FIRST YEAR REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATE FACULTIES. POSSIBLE COURSES MIGHT INCLUDE 200 LEVEL COURSES IN ENGLISH, LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, ECONOMICS, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES, ACCOUNTING, HISTORY, PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, EDUCATION, ENGINEERING DESIGN, SPEECH PATHOLOGY, AND HOME ECONOMICS.

(c) THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE WOULD OFFER GREAT FLEXIBILITY IN THAT:

- IT WOULD ALLOW A STUDENT TO TAKE UNIVERSITY COURSES WHILE CONCURRENTLY TAKING A HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL COURSE AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION WHEN IT IS NECESSARY FOR A STUDENT TO CLEAR A MATRICULATION SUBJECT WHICH IS A FACULTY PREREQUISITE.
- IT WOULD ALLOW A STUDENT WHO WISHES TO DO SO TO BECOME ACCLIMATIZED TO UNIVERSITY WORK BY TAKING LESS THAN A FULL COURSE LOAD.

(d) PRE-ADMISSION AND ONGOING COUNSELLING BY AN EXPERIENCED ADVISOR WOULD BE MANDATORY. THE COUNSELLOR COULD ACT AS LIAISON WITH FACULTIES FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES AND TO FACILITATE TRANSFER, AS WELL AS HELP STUDENTS TO FIND THE MOST SATISFACTORY MEANS OF CLEARING MATRICULATION SUBJECTS THAT ARE FACULTY PREREQUISITES.

(e) MATURE STUDENTS WISHING TO PURSUE STUDIES IN A PARTICULAR SUBJECT OR SUBJECTS FOR INTEREST, SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO COMPLETE IN THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE UP TO FIVE FULL COURSE EQUIVALENTS INCLUDING SENIOR LEVEL COURSES (SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE AND NECESSARY PREREQUISITES) AND THEN BE REQUIRED TO CONSULT AN ACADEMIC COUNSELLOR TO PLAN FUTURE UNIVERSITY STUDIES.

4.1.2 Clearance of Matriculation Deficiencies

Some students admitted to the university as non-matriculated adult students may be required to clear one or two matriculation deficiencies in their first year. For instance, in the Faculty of Arts a matriculation deficiency in a language other than English may be cleared by taking a 100 level language course, which at present receives credit. Such courses have fulfilled two functions: they have been used as courses equivalent to high school 30 level courses to clear matriculation deficiencies, and they are offered as introductory level courses in subjects which a student has not had an opportunity to study previously. Some 100 level courses awarded credit by the Faculty of Arts may not be

credited by another faculty, e.g., a 100 level science course can be credited to a Bachelor of Arts degree, but will not be credited towards a Bachelor of Science degree if the course was a faculty requirement for admission. The view of the Task Force on this issue is that courses required for matriculation standing should be completed outside of the university prior to admission to a faculty.

RECOMMENDATION

UNIVERSITY COURSES AT THE 100 LEVEL SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLEARING MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS.

4.1.3 Admission to Quota Faculties

Mature students may have particular difficulty competing for admission to Quota faculties. Although they may meet the requirements for admission, the grade inflation which has occurred in the high schools during the past decade gives more recent high school graduates an advantage in the system which relies heavily on academic standing. Concern was expressed to the Task Force about admissions decisions which are made based on an individual's academic achievement, or lack of achievement, many years in the past, without considering one's accomplishments since that time.

It is interesting to note that only the Faculty of Law makes special provision by setting aside places for mature students. Assessment may include consideration of one's life and work experiences in addition to academic qualifications.

4.1.3 Admission to Quota Faculties (continued)

RECOMMENDATION

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR SHOULD DEVELOP PROCEDURES TO ADJUST THE HIGH SCHOOL AND/OR POSTSECONDARY GRADES OF MATURE APPLICANTS WHO COMPLETED SCHOOLING PRIOR TO 1973, IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO COMPETE FAIRLY FOR ENTRY TO QUOTA FACULTIES.

4.2 UNCLASSIFIED STUDENTS

The Task Force hoped that study of the unclassified group of students would provide information about barriers which prevent people who desire a university education from attending. The unclassified student category instituted in September 1982, is a new mode of access intended to serve those who wish to take a credit course at The University of Alberta but who do not wish to commit themselves to a degree program. Students may select from a list of numerous introductory level courses which do not have specific prerequisites. The list of courses available to unclassified students in each session varies from year to year. Unclassified students may register in only one half course per term to a maximum of five half courses.

While unclassified students are not required to submit high school or university transcripts or take the English competency examination prior to attendance, it is expected they will meet university level standards in their course work. Not eligible for admission in this category are applicants who have been required to withdraw from a postsecondary educational institution.

A record of the student's work will be kept and should the individual decide to register in a degree program at a later date, the credits earned as an unclassified student can be used in the program if the course meets the requirements of the particular degree.

Approximately 200 students registered in this category in the Fall of 1982, with another 100 registered as unclassified students in the January 1983 term. There were 40 withdrawals from the first term, 12 from the second.

In March 1983 a questionnaire was sent to 300 students who had been admitted to the university in this category in September 1982 or January 1983. One hundred and forty-seven responses were received.

Questionnaire responses indicate that the majority of unclassified students are mature, although 28% of students who chose to enter university in this category are under 25 years of age. The majority (32%) are between 25 and 34 years of age, 19% are between 35 and 44 years, and 21% are over the age of 45.

Of the total sample, 61% are female, 51% are living on their own, 64% have some homemaking responsibilities, 48% have children at home, 56% are employed full-time outside of the home, 16% are full-time homemakers, and 12% have part-time jobs.

Other interesting findings are: one third of the unclassified students indicated that they had taken university Extension courses. Academic backgrounds at high school, community college and university are equally represented in the group. The majority learned of the unclassified student category through the newspaper (50%), by word of mouth and from the Office of the Registrar (33%).

Among the reasons why these people chose the unclassified category were: because they were not academically qualified for regular admission (14%), were too late to register (15%), for their own interest (20%), just wanted to try university level work (22%), and to avoid registration, or other reasons (26%). Sixty percent expect to transfer to the Faculty of Arts. Their grades are normally distributed and 48% reported doing as well as they expected, 19% did better and 21% did less well.

The unclassified students indicated that situational barriers, such as time pressures, multiple responsibilities, and financial problems, were

primary deterrents to university attendance. Of secondary importance were institutional barriers, with lack of admission requirements cited most frequently, then difficulties obtaining information, transfer credit problems and scheduling difficulties. Personal barriers such as concern about academic competence and lack of self confidence were less important considerations in an individual's decision to apply to university. The barriers to university attendance indicated by the unclassified group of students appear to be the same, for the most part, as the difficulties experienced by mature students in attendance in regular programs. The unclassified student category may not be needed if a non-program route of admission is established.

4.3 SERVICES TO MATURE STUDENTS

4.3.1 Orientation and General Information Services

The University of Alberta has a number of areas which provide students with initial information about the University. General information about university resources, registration procedures, program advice and direction regarding more specialized information needs may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Affairs or Student Counselling Services. The latter two, under the direction of the Dean of Students, are responsible in addition for a number of special services and programs. Detailed information about programs and courses should be sought from faculty or departmental offices.

Questionnaire #2 asked students about their use of these services and how effective they found them to be. The majority of mature students indicated that they had sought academic advice from one or more of the major offices and that they had found the services very helpful or at least somewhat helpful. Twenty percent of the sample indicated that they had not found the counselling of any great value. Ten percent of the mature students indicated that they had sought assistance with personal problems from the Office of Student Counselling, and 90% were aware that Student Counselling provided such services.

Apart from those services aimed at the total university population of students, attention has been given to the needs of the mature students on campus. For example, the Office of Student Affairs sponsors Orientation Sessions for mature students, publishes an Information Handbook for Mature Students, and organizes Brown Bag Lunch Sessions to bring mature students together informally.

The Mature Student Orientation Sessions appear to suffer from lack of visibility, since 76% of respondents to questionnaire #2 indicated that they were unaware of the sessions. Another 15% indicated that they were aware of them but had not attended. Of the 10% who had attended the sessions, all but one person indicated that they had found the sessions helpful. To date the Orientation Sessions have been held during the daytime and are, therefore, unavailable to those students who work until the start of classes.

With regard to the Information Handbook for Mature Students, 88% of students reported that they were unaware of its existence. Those who knew of it reported that they found it helpful. Since considerable effort and money goes into the production of the Handbook, it is obvious that the university needs to find a better way to make it available to those students for whom it is intended.

As for the Brown Bag Lunches, 65% of students reported that they were unaware that the sessions were offered. Another 30% reported that they were aware of the sessions but that the times and/or place were inconvenient, and that they had not attended. Of the handful of students reporting that they had attended the Brown Bag Lunch Sessions, they seemed evenly split on whether or not they had enjoyed the sessions and would or would not return.

Since mature students who have used these services have found them beneficial, it is regrettable that many mature students remain unaware of these worthwhile efforts undertaken by the Office of Student Affairs and Student Counselling Services. However, it may be that the mature students in advanced years of study are the ones who do not know of these services, since it is only in the last two years that they have been emphasized.

4.3.1 Orientation and General Information Services (continued)

RECOMMENDATION

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THE EFFECTIVE AND WIDESPREAD PROMOTION OF ALL INFORMATION SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MATURE STUDENTS.

- ORIENTATION SESSIONS SHOULD BE HELD DURING EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS IN ADDITION TO DAYTIME HOURS AND IN BOTH THE FALL AND THE WINTER TERMS.
- MEANS SHOULD BE FOUND TO DISTRIBUTE THE INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR MATURE STUDENTS TO EACH MATURE STUDENT BEFORE REGISTRATION.

4.3.2 Counselling Services for Mature Students

Making generalizations about mature students is a hazardous enterprise. Some adults who are returning to school resent any special treatment on the part of educational institutions. These people often feel that they are more highly motivated, more business-like and more experienced than younger students, and hence resent what they regard as concessions. They see their return to an educational institution as a challenge that they are easily prepared to meet and overcome. Some of these students are correct in their perceptions and experience no difficulties.

Many mature students do not return to schooling with an air of confidence, however. There are those who initially feel optimistic, but soon lose their courage in the face of academic demands. Contributors to the Task Force enquiry consistently emphasized that a combination of domestic, financial and academic concerns cause particular stress for many mature students.

These mature students should have access to counsellors who are especially knowledgeable about the problems of mature students and who could assist them in overcoming academic and personal obstacles before they become insurmountable barriers to further education.

Academic counselling (program and course information) is an area where satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends to a large extent on knowing the right questions to ask at the right place, and the chance of being directed to knowledgeable individuals within each faculty or department. Incoming mature students, particularly those who have been away from studies for a time, may need special advice and academic counselling because their background, needs and circumstances may differ from those of younger students entering university directly from high school.

There are particular difficulties with provision of academic counselling to students before they are admitted to the university. Mature individuals, unlike students coming directly from high school, do not have access to a high school counsellor, and may need a good deal of program information and advice from various departments even before deciding to apply. Recent increases in student enrolment and decreases in staff have placed great pressures on faculties and departments. Most do not have the time or resources to advise many students on an individual basis. In the Department of Recreation Administration, individual counselling is provided by members of the academic staff to the 200 students enrolled. Many faculties are unable to do this, however, and can offer only limited individual counselling, or academic counselling in group sessions. Mature students with a need for individual counselling are especially frustrated if it is unavailable. Approximately 25% of mature students responding to questionnaire #2 experienced ongoing difficulties in the area of academic counselling.

RECOMMENDATION

WHILE SOME MATURE STUDENTS PRESENTLY RECEIVE SATISFACTORY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE VARIOUS SOURCES OF INFORMATION, THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT ALL OF THE SERVICES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO MATURE STUDENTS SHOULD BE CO-ORDINATED INTO A SINGLE RESOURCE UNIT WITH HIGH VISIBILITY.

4.3.2 Recommendation (continued)

THIS UNIT COULD COMBINE MOST OF THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES RECOMMENDED IN THIS REPORT. FOR EXAMPLE:

1. AN INFORMATION DESK FOR MATURE STUDENT INQUIRIES WITH INFORMATION ABOUT ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS, STUDENT LOANS AND OTHER INFORMATION NORMALLY GIVEN AT THE ACCESS CENTRE; THE TELEPHONE NUMBER TO BE LISTED IN THE EDMONTON TELEPHONE DIRECTORY UNIVERSITY LISTINGS.

2. A FULL-TIME ACADEMIC ADVISOR KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ALL PROGRAMS, WHO COULD ACT AS LIAISON TO FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS AND ALSO CO-ORDINATE STUDY SKILLS SESSIONS; EACH DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONSIDER HAVING A PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL DESIGNATED TO HANDLE MATURE STUDENT INQUIRIES.

3. A COUNSELLOR EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH MATURE STUDENTS AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AREAS OF STRESS COMMON AMONG MATURE STUDENTS.

4. A LOUNGE AREA AND A STUDY ROOM OPEN ALL DAY, EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS; POSSIBLY AN EXISTING FACILITY COULD BE USED SUCH AS HERITAGE LOUNGE IN ATHABASCA HALL.

5. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE IMPORTANT. PUBLICITY OF THE UNIT AND ORGANIZATION OF SEMINARS AND PROGRAMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO MATURE STUDENTS COULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A MATURE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. THE STUDENTS' UNION SHOULD TAKE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE UNIT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

Recommendations result from the findings and conclusions of the Task Force, and constitute its best judgement as to what action the appropriate authorities should take to better meet the needs of mature students. Following is a list of the Task Force Recommendations which appear in context earlier in the Report:

3.1.4 Support Services (Library, Offices, Bookstore)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE HOURS OF OFFICES AND CAMPUS SERVICES SHOULD BE EXTENDED BEYCND THEIR PRESENT HOURS TO INCLUDE THE NOON HOUR AND AT LEAST ONE EVENING A WEEK WITH APPROPRIATE CO-ORDINATION, PUBLICITY, AND SECURITY MEASURES. ADDITIONAL COSTS MIGHT BE AVOIDED BY ADOPTION OF A FLEXIBLE TIME SCHEDULE.

3.1.5 Choice of Courses in the Evening

AS THE ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DAY DICTATE THAT MORE AND MORE STUDENTS MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR OWN SUPPORT, THE NEED FOR ALTERNATE CLASS TIMES BECOME IMPERATIVE. THEREFORE IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE ISSUE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF EVENING CREDIT COURSES ON CAMPUS SHOULD BE EXAMINED BY THE UNIVERSITY.

3.1.6 Residency Requirements

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT FACULTIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA RE-EXAMINE THEIR RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS, AND CONSIDER WHAT CHANGES WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE ACADEMICALLY, YET COULD BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS.

3.1.7 Registration

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT ALL EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SIMPLIFIED AND FLEXIBLE SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION FOR ALL STUDENTS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS.

3.1.9 Credit by Special Assessment

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT, FOR APPROPRIATE COURSES, FACULTIES GIVE INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF METHODS TO ASSESS AND GIVE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING.

3.1.11 Study Space

TO MEET THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR QUIET STUDY SPACE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE UNIVERSITY CONSIDER DESIGNATING EMPTY CLASSROOMS AS EVENING STUDY ROOMS, AND MAKE CREATIVE USE OF OTHER SPACES ON CAMPUS NOT NORMALLY UTILIZED FOR STUDY. LOCATIONS SHOULD BE WELL-PUBLICIZED, e.g. IN THE STUDENTS' UNION HANDBOOK, THE INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR MATURE STUDENTS AND THE GATEWAY.

3.2.3 Finances

IF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IS TO BE READILY AVAILABLE TO MATURE PEOPLE IN THE GENERAL POPULATION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT CERTAIN GROUPS OF MATURE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE REAL FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND MAY NEED TO BE SINGLED OUT FOR FINANCIAL HELP.

LOANS, SCHOLARSHIPS, BURSARIES AND AWARDS FOR THE MATURE STUDENT AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE PART-TIME MATURE STUDENT APPEAR TO BE IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY. THE POLICIES OF BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH MEANS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT SHOULD BE REVIEWED, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME MATURE STUDENTS AS A SPECIALIZED GROUP.

3.3.4 Skill Improvement

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR MATURE STUDENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE AND WELL PUBLICIZED PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SKILLS, TO BE DEVELOPED AND PRESENTED BY PROFESSIONALS IN EACH OF THE AREAS: EXAMINATIONS, ESSAY WRITING, USE OF LIBRARY, STUDY SKILLS, TIME MANAGEMENT.

3.3.5 Upgrading and Remediation

REMEDIATION AND UPGRADING SHOULD NOT BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY'S CREDIT FACULTIES AND, WHERE REQUIRED, SHOULD BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO ADMISSION TO A FACULTY. THE POTENTIAL FOR THE FACULTY OF EXTENSION TO EXPAND ITS REMEDIAL AND UPGRADING COURSES WITH A FOCUS ON THE NEEDS OF THE MATURE STUDENT SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED.

4.1.1 Alternate Routes of Entry

1. THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE "NON-MATRICULATED ADULT" CATEGORY OF ADMISSION BE ABOLISHED.

2. THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE TERM "MATURE STUDENT" BE USED UNIFORMLY THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSITY TO APPLY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE 23 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER.

3. THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-PROGRAM ROUTE OF ADMISSION OPEN TO ALL MATURE STUDENTS; FOR EXAMPLE:

   - STUDENTS WHO MEET UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS BUT WHO MAY WISH TO TAKE COURSES PRIMARILY FOR INTEREST;
   - STUDENTS WHO MEET UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS BUT LACK SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A QUOTA FACULTY;
   - STUDENTS WHO DO NOT MEET THE UNIVERSITY'S ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS (AT PRESENT THE NON-MATRICULATED ADULTS).

   (a) CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE SHOULD BE A MINIMUM AGE OF 23 YEARS AND SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE ENGLISH COMPETENCY EXAMINATION.

   (b) THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE SHOULD PROVIDE A LIMITED NUMBER OF JUNIOR LEVEL COURSES (APPROXIMATELY 15-20 COURSES) WHICH WOULD REPRESENT FIRST YEAR REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATE FACULTIES. POSSIBLE COURSES MIGHT INCLUDE 200 LEVEL COURSES IN ENGLISH, LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, ECONOMICS, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES, ACCOUNTING, HISTORY, PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, EDUCATION, ENGINEERING DESIGN, SPEECH PATHOLOGY, AND HOME ECONOMICS.

4.1.1 Alternate Routes of Entry (continued)

(c) THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE WOULD OFFER GREAT FLEXIBILITY IN THAT:

- IT WOULD ALLOW A STUDENT TO TAKE UNIVERSITY COURSES WHILE CONCURRENTLY TAKING A HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL COURSE AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION WHEN IT IS NECESSARY FOR A STUDENT TO CLEAR A MATRICULATION SUBJECT WHICH IS A FACULTY PREREQUISITE.

- IT WOULD ALLOW A STUDENT WHO WISHES TO DO SO TO BECOME ACCLIMATIZED TO UNIVERSITY WORK BY TAKING LESS THAN A FULL COURSE LOAD.

(d) PRE-ADMISSION AND ONGOING COUNSELLING BY AN EXPERIENCED ADVISOR WOULD BE MANDATORY. THE COUNSELLOR COULD ACT AS LIAISON WITH FACULTIES FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES AND TO FACILITATE TRANSFER, AS WELL AS HELP STUDENTS TO FIND THE MOST SATISFACTORY MEANS OF CLEARING MATRICULATION SUBJECTS THAT ARE FACULTY PREREQUISITES.

(e) MATURE STUDENTS WISHING TO PURSUE STUDIES IN A PARTICULAR SUBJECT OR SUBJECTS FOR INTEREST SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO COMPLETE IN THE NON-PROGRAM ROUTE UP TO FIVE FULL COURSE EQUIVALENTS INCLUDING SENIOR LEVEL COURSES (SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE AND NECESSARY PREREQUISITES) AND THEN BE REQUIRED TO CONSULT AN ACADEMIC COUNSELLOR TO PLAN FUTURE UNIVERSITY STUDIES.

4.1.2 Clearance of Matriculation Deficiencies

UNIVERSITY COURSES AT THE 100 LEVEL SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLEARING MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS.

4.1.3 Admission to Quota Faculties

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR SHOULD DEVELOP PROCEDURES TO ADJUST THE HIGH SCHOOL AND/OR POSTSECONDARY GRADES OF MATURE APPLICANTS WHO COMPLETED SCHOOLING PRIOR TO 1973, IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO COMPETE FAIRLY FOR ENTRY TO QUOTA FACULTIES.

4.3.1 Orientation and General Information Services

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THE EFFECTIVE AND WIDESPREAD PROMOTION OF ALL INFORMATION SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MATURE STUDENTS.

- ORIENTATION SESSIONS SHOULD BE HELD DURING EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS IN ADDITION TO DAYTIME HOURS AND IN BOTH THE FALL AND THE WINTER TERMS.

- MEANS SHOULD BE FOUND TO DISTRIBUTE THE INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR MATURE STUDENTS TO EACH MATURE STUDENT BEFORE REGISTRATION.

4.3.2 Counselling Services for Mature Students

WHILE SOME MATURE STUDENTS PRESENTLY RECEIVE SATISFACTORY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE VARIOUS SOURCES OF INFORMATION, THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT ALL OF THE SERVICES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO MATURE STUDENTS SHOULD BE CO-ORDINATED INTO A SINGLE RESOURCE UNIT WITH HIGH VISIBILITY.

THIS UNIT COULD COMBINE MOST OF THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES RECOMMENDED IN THIS REPORT. FOR EXAMPLE:

1. AN INFORMATION DESK FOR MATURE STUDENT INQUIRIES WITH INFORMATION ABOUT ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS, STUDENT LOANS AND OTHER INFORMATION NORMALLY GIVEN AT THE ACCESS CENTRE; THE TELEPHONE NUMBER TO BE LISTED IN THE EDMONTON TELEPHONE DIRECTORY UNIVERSITY LISTINGS.

2. A FULL-TIME ACADEMIC ADVISOR KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ALL PROGRAMS, WHO COULD ACT AS LIAISON TO FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS AND ALSO CO-ORDINATE STUDY SKILLS SESSIONS; EACH DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONSIDER HAVING A PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL DESIGNATED TO HANDLE MATURE STUDENT INQUIRIES.

4.3.2 Counselling Services for Mature Students (continued)

3. A COUNSELLOR EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH MATURE STUDENTS AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AREAS OF STRESS COMMON AMONG MATURE STUDENTS.

4. A LOUNGE AREA AND A STUDY ROOM OPEN ALL DAY, EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS; POSSIBLY AN EXISTING FACILITY COULD BE USED SUCH AS HERITAGE LOUNGE IN ATHABASCA HALL.

5. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE IMPORTANT. PUBLICITY OF THE UNIT AND ORGANIZATION OF SEMINARS AND PROGRAMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO MATURE STUDENTS COULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A MATURE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION. THE STUDENTS' UNION SHOULD TAKE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE UNIT.

IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED:

THAT A PROGRESS REPORT WITH REGARD TO ACTIONS RESULTING FROM THESE RECOMMENDATIONS BE PRESENTED TO THE SENATE WITHIN TWO YEARS.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

COPIES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

APPENDIX B

The Senate
The University of Alberta

110 Athabasca Hall
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T6G 2E8
Telephone 403 432-2268

SENATE TASK FORCE ON MATURE STUDENTS

Members of The Senate of The University of Alberta, at a recent meeting, were surprised to learn that mature students now constitute approximately 25% of the full-time student body of the university. Past experience has demonstrated that mature students add diversity and variety to the classroom process, and have a great deal to offer as prospective class members. Accordingly, The Senate has established a Task Force on Mature Students in order to learn more about the expectations and difficulties experienced by this increasingly significant group of students.

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to learn of your concerns, with a view to providing the university with information which could at least mitigate, if not resolve, the major problems faced by the mature student population. A business reply envelope is enclosed.

Your thoughtful consideration and response to the questions will assist the Task Force in making recommendations to The University of Alberta about ways in which the university might better meet the needs of mature students. Please do not hesitate to communicate any additional concerns or suggestions you may wish to recommend for our consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Marguerite Trussler, Chairperson
Task Force on Mature Students

August 1982

APPENDIX B

The Senate
The University of Alberta

150 Athabasca Hall
Edmonton, Alberta
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August 1982

TASK FORCE ON MATURE STUDENTS: QUESTIONNAIRE - INCOMING STUDENTS

Please place the appropriate number in the space provided to the left of the question. Add any additional information which you feel will help to clarify your responses.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

(10) _ 1. What is your sex? (1) Male (2) Female

(11) _ _ 2. What is your age?

(13) _ 3. What is your marital status? (1) Single (2) Married (3) Common-law (4) Other (specify)

(14) _ 4. Will you contribute to the family income while attending University? (1) Yes (2) No

(15) _ 5. Will you have homemaking responsibilities? (1) Yes (2) No

(16) _ 6. Will you have childcare responsibilities? (1) Yes (2) No

(17) _ 7. Will you need financial assistance (1) Yes (2) No

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

(18) _ 8. What is your reason for planning to attend University?

(1) Interest/enrichment
(2) Career opportunites
(3) Completion of under grad degree
(4) Graduate studies
(5) Other (please specify)

(19) _ _ 9. Which faculty are you applying to?

(01) Agriculture/Forestry
(02) Arts
(03) Business
(04) Dentistry
(05) Education
(06) Engineering
(07) Faculté Saint-Jean
(08) Graduate Studies & Research
(09) Home Economics
(10) Law
(11) Library Science
(12) Medicine
(13) Nursing
(14) Pharmacy
(15) Physical Education & Recreation
(16) Rehabilitation Medicine
(17) Science

ACADEMIC INFORMATION, CONT'D

(36) _ 10. Are you planning to work towards a degree? (1) Yes (2) No

(37) _ 11. Do you plan to attend (1) Winter Session (2) Spring Session (3) Summer Session

(40) _ 12. Will you be attending (1) Full-time (2) Part-time (3) Evening credit course

(43) _ 13. Do you plan to transfer to a different faculty/program If so, please specify: (1) Yes (2) No

(44) _ 14. What would be the best class time for you? (1) Daytime (2) Late afternoon (3) Evening (4) Weekend

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

15. Have you experienced problems obtaining information about any of the following? (Please circle appropriate response).

	Yes	No	
(45)	1	2	Eligibility for admission
(46)	1	2	Admission procedures
(47)	1	2	Programs and courses required and available
(48)	1	2	Registration procedures
(49)	1	2	Counseling from the faculty of your choice
(50)	1	2	Counseling from Student Services

16. Did you have any difficulty obtaining any of the following? (Please circle appropriate response).

(51)	1	2	Admission
(52)	1	2	Required dcoumentation for admission
(53)	1	2	Counseling from the faculty of your choice
(54)	1	2	Counseling from Student Services

(55) _ 17. Do you anticipate any difficulty in obtaining financial assistance? (1) Yes (2) No

(56) _ 18. Are you most like to apply for financial assistance from (1) Student Finance Board (2) Bank loan (3) Personal sources (e.g. family)

(57) _ 19. Do you anticipate any difficulty in obtaining daycare service, if required (1) Yes (2) No

APPENDIX B

20. In your plan to attend university, what are your expectations?

21. Do you anticipate any special problems?

APPENDIX B

The Senate
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February 1983

SENATE TASK FORCE ON MATURE STUDENTS

Members of The Senate of The University of Alberta learned recently that mature students now constitute approximately 25% of the student body of the university. The Senate has established a Task Force on Mature Students in order to learn more about the nature of the mature student population on campus, as well as about the expectations and difficulties experienced by this increasingly significant group of students.

The following questionnaire is being sent to University of Alberta students over the age of 25 years. Your thoughtful consideration and response to the questions will assist the Task Force in making recommendations to The University of Alberta about ways in which the university might better meet the needs of mature students.

A stamped reply envelope is enclosed. It would be appreciated if completed questionnaires could be returned at your earliest opportunity; in any event not later than February 25, 1983.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Marguerite Trussler, Chairperson
Task Force on Mature Students

APPENDIX B

SENATE TASK FORCE ON MATURE STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE FEBRUARY 1983

SECTION ONE: Questions in this section deal with background information. Please circle the number of the appropriate response, or write in the blank provided.

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1. What is your present age? _____years — 1)___ ___

2. Your sex? 1. Male 2. Female — 3)___

3. What is your current marital status? — 4)___

1. single 2. married 3. common-law 4. separated, divorced

5. widowed

4. Do you have homemaking responsibilities? — 5)___

1. none 2. self only 3. few 4. many

5. Do you have children at home? — 6)___ 7)___ 8)___ 9)___

1. none 2. preschoolers (how many___) 3. aged 5 to 14 (how many___) 4. aged 15 or older (how many___)

6. Before coming to the University of Alberta , what was the highest level of education which you had completed? — 10)___

1. some high school
2. high school matriculation
3. some university
4. university degree
5. some community college, or technical institute
6. graduate of community college, or technical institute

7. (Please answer only if married or in common-law relationship) What is the highest level of education completed by your spouse? — 11)___

1. some high school
2. high school matriculation
3. some university
4. university degree
5. some community college, or technical institute
6. graduate of community college, or technical institute

8. While attending university are you employed outside the home? — 12)___

1. full time 2. part time 3. not employed

9. Before coming to university how was the majority of your work time spent? — 13)___

1. full time job 2. full time homemaker 3. part time job
4. student at other institution 5. other (specify)_____

10. What is the current level of your income (before tax), or if married, the combined income of you + spouse? — 14)___

1. under $15,000 2. $15,000 to $24,999 3. $25,000 to $39,999
4. $40,000 to $54,999 5. over $55,000

11. Did you give up employment income in order to come to university? — 15)___

1. not previously employed 2. income not reduced

Income reduced by: 3. $5,000 to $10,000 4. $10,000 to $20,000 5. more than $20,000

TFMS QUESTIONNAIRE
page 2

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SECTION TWO: The following questions relate to the University of Alberta Please circle the number of the appropriate response, or write in the blank provided.

12. In which faculty are you enrolled? 16)___

1. Arts - undergraduate
2. Science - undergraduate
3. Education - undergraduate
4. Other - undergraduate (Please specify)_____
5. Graduate Studies

13. At what level are you now considered to be? _____year 17)___

14. If you have transferred faculty, in which faculty were you first enrolled? 18)___

Faculty of _____

15. How many courses are you taking this term (January to April 1983)? 19)___

_____ courses

16. What is the approximate grade point average which you have maintained this year? 20)___

4 5 6 7 8 9

17. What time of day do you attend classes? 21)___

1. daytime 2. evening 3. both

18. Which time of day do you prefer to attend classes? 22)___

1. daytime 2. evening 3. late afternoon

19. What was your primary reason for coming to university? 23)___

_____

20. Has your academic performance been what you expected? 24)___

1. better than expected 2. about what expected 3. not up to expectations

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SECTION THREE: The following section attempts to identify the major problems experienced by mature students. Difficulties have been grouped into four categories. Please place a check in the appropriate column:

INSTITUTIONAL (within the university's direct influence)	ongoing problem	was a problem, now resolved	not a problem	Office use only
a. difficulties obtaining pre-admission information				25)
b. difficulties obtaining information from faculties or departments				26)
c. inadequate academic counselling				27)
d. inaccessibility of support services at convenient times (library, bookstore)				28)
e. inadequate choice of courses in evenings				29)
f. rigid residency requirements				30)
g. inflexible deadlines				31)
h. registration difficulties				32)
i. problems obtaining books or materials				33)
j. difficulties with transfer of credits from other universities or colleges				34)
k. parking problems				35)
l. inadequate study space at university				36)

SITUATIONAL (outside of the university's direct influence)				
a. time pressures				37)
b. balancing multiple responsibilities				38)
c. financial difficulties				39)
d. health problems				40)
e. unavailability of childcare				41)
f. travel difficulties				42)
g. lack of encouragement from family or peers				43)
h. disruption of family life				44)
i. lack of peer group contact				45)
j. inadequate study space at home				46)

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ACADEMIC (deficiencies or inexperience in certain areas)

	ongoing problem	was a problem now resolved	not a problem	Office use only
a. difficulties in writing examinations				47)
b. inadequacies in essay writing skills				48)
c. poor study habits				49)

ATTITUDINAL (perceptions or attitudes which affect performance)

a. lack of motivation				50)
b. difficulty maintaining concentration				51)
c. lack of confidence				52)
d. feelings of isolation				53)
e. negative attitude of professor toward mature students				54)

IN SUMMARY, WHAT IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, IS THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM WHICH MATURE STUDENTS FACE? _____

_____

_____

SECTION FOUR: This section deals with your evaluation of services provided by the university. Please circle the appropriate response, or write in the blank provided.

21. Have you requested individual academic counselling from any of the following? 55) ___

1. Registrar's office 2. Faculty or Department Advisor 56) ___

3. Office of Student Affairs 4. Student Counselling Service 57) ___

22. How helpful were they? 58) ___

1. very helpful 2. somewhat helpful 3. not helpful 59) ___

23. Have you ever used the Student Counselling Service for assistance with personal problems? 60) ___

1. yes 2. no 3. unaware of the service

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Office use on

24. Have you found the Mature Student Handbook helpful? 61)___

1. have never seen it
2. very helpful
3. somewhat helpful
4. not helpful

25. Have you ever attended the Brown Bag Lunch Sessions for mature students? 62)___

1. not aware of it
2. time not convenient
3. attended and enjoyed
4. attended but did not enjoy

26. Did you attend the Mature Student Orientation Sessions? 63)___

1. not aware of it
2. knew of it but did not attend
3. attended and found it helpful
4. attended but did not find it helpful

27. If the following services were available what use would you make of them.
Please check appropriate column:

	extensive use	might use	not use	
a. a drop in centre for mature students				64)___
b. a mature student advisor to assist with course planning				65)___
c. seminars in study skills				66)___
d. seminars in essay writing				67)___
e. seminars in exam preparation				68)___

28. Many mature students require academic upgrading in certain subjects before commencing university studies. Where do you thing this should be available? 69)___

1. as part of the University credit program
2. through the University Faculty of Extension (non-credit)
3. outside of the university (ie: community college)

****

Your co-operation is sincerely appreciated.
Please mail in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.

APPENDIX B

The Senate
The University of Alberta

Tory Athabasca Hall
Edmonton, Alberta
Telephone 403 432 2[illegible]

February 1983

TASK FORCE ON MATURE STUDENTS

The Senate Task Force on Mature Students is charged with the responsibility of determining the kinds of problems which affect mature students' decisions to enter the University of Alberta, as well as the special difficulties they may experience while in attendance.

It is anticipated that the Task Force will make recommendations which hopefully will enhance the opportunities for mature persons to pursue a university education.

The Task Force feels that, as one of the first students to take advantage of the new Unclassified Registration category, you could add considerably to our knowledge. For that reason, we are asking you to complete the following questionnaire and to return it as soon as possible, preferably before March 1, 1983, so that we may include your responses in our report in April to The Senate.

Thank you for participating in the study. Your efforts in helping make the University more accessible to the public are very much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Marguerite Trussler, Chairperson
Task Force on Mature Students

****

QUESTIONNAIRE - UNCLASSIFIED STUDENTS

SECTION ONE: Questions in this section deal with background information. Please circle the number of the appropriate response, or write in the blank provided.

Office use only

1) ___ ___

3) ___

1. What is your present age?

_____years

2. Your sex? 1. male 2. female

(over.....)

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3. What is your current marital status? 4)___
   1. single 2. married 3. common-law
   4. separated, divorced 5. widowed

4. Do you have homemaking responsibilities? 5)___
   1. none 2. self only 3. few 4. many

5. Do you have children at home? 6)___
   1. none 2. preschoolers (how many____) 3. aged 5 to 14 (how many____) 4. aged 15 or older (how many____) 7)___ 8)___

6. Before coming to the University of Alberta, what was the highest level of education which you had completed? 9)___
   1. some high school 2. high school matriculation
   3. some university 4. university degree
   5. some community college or technical institute 6. graduate of community college or technical institute

7. Have you ever taken a University of Alberta Extension course? 10)___
   1. no 2. one 3. more than one

8. Apart from the time for your university course, how is the majority of your time spent? 11)___
   1. full time job 2. homemaker 3. part time job
   4. volunteer work 5. student at another institution
   6. other (please specify)_____

SECTION TWO: The following questions relate to the University of Alberta. Please circle the number of the appropriate response or write in the blank provided.

1. How did you learn about the Unclassified Student category? 12)___
   1. newspaper 2. word of mouth 3 University publication
   4. Registrar's Office 5. other

2. Why did you choose to enroll as an Unclassified Student, rather than in a regular degree program? 13)___ 14)___
   _____ 15)___
   _____ 16)___

3. In which term did you take a course? (circle two if applicable) 17)___
   1. Sept. to Dec. 2. Jan. to April 3. full year course 18)___

4. What grade did you receive? 19)___
   4 5 6 7 8 9 n/a

5. Have you dropped a course? 20)___
   1. no 2. in fall term 3. in winter term

6. Has your academic performance been what you expected? 21)___
   1. better than expected 2. about what expected 3. not up to expectations

7. Do you plan to transfer courses completed as an Unclassified Student to another University program? 1. yes 2. no 22)___

8. If so, which faculty interests you? 23)___ ___
   Faculty of_____ 24)___ ___

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SECTION THREE: Please read the three statements below, AA, BB and CC, and answer the appropriate set of questions which follow, and which are most applicable to your circumstances.

AA If you previously APPLIED to the University of Alberta but did not attend, what were the reasons? PLEASE COMPLETE SECTION AA.

or

BB If you previously had THOUGHT about coming to the University of Alberta but did not apply, what were the reasons? PLEASE COMPLETE SECTION BB.

or

CC All others: What influenced your decision to enroll as an Unclassified Student? (If you chose CC, this is the last question, and we thank you for your co-operation.)

_____

_____

_____

SECTION AA "PREVIOUSLY APPLIED BUT DID NOT ATTEND"

Please examine the reasons listed below, and in each category place a 1 beside the major reason you did not attend. If there was more than one problem, place a 2, 3 etc. in the space beside those other factors which influenced your decision. If there was a circumstance affecting your decision which is not listed, please include it in the space provided.

	Office use only
BARRIERS TO ENTRY - by University	
___ did not meet admission requirements	27)___
___ difficulties obtaining information from the University of Alberta	28___
___ inadequate academic counselling	29)___
___ inadequate choice of courses at convenient times	30)___
___ rigid residency requirements	31)___
___ registration process too cumbersome	32)___
___ difficulties with transfer of credits from other university or college	33)___
___ not accepted to Quota faculty	34)___
Other:_____	35)___
	36)___
BARRIERS TO ENTRY - Situational	
___ time pressures	37)___
___ balancing multiple responsibilities	38)___
___ financial difficulties	39)___
___ health problems	40)___
___ unavailability of child care	41)___
___ transportation difficulties	42)___
___ lack of encouragement from family or peers	43)___
___ disruption of family life	44)___
Other:_____	45)___
	46)___
BARRIERS TO ENTRY - Personal	
___ lack of motivation	47)___
___ lack of confidence	48)___
___ feelings of isolation (would not know anybody)	49)___
___ concern about academic competence (writing exams, essays)	50)___
	51)___
___ Other_____	

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SECTION BB "THOUGHT ABOUT COMING TO UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA BUT DID NOT APPLY"

Please examine the reasons listed below, and in each category place a 1 beside the major reason you did not apply. If there was more than one problem, place a 2, 3, etc.. in the space beside those other factors which influenced your decision. If there was a circumstance affecting your decision which is not listed, please include it in the space provided.

BARRIERS - by University

Office use only

___ concerned that I could not meet admission requirements — 52)___
___ difficulty obtaining information from Registrar's Office — 53)___
___ difficulty obtaining information from faculty offices — 54)___
___ inadequate choice of courses at convenient times — 55)___
___ heard that registration process was too cumbersome — 56)___
___ did not think I would get credit for studies taken at another postsecondary institution — 57)___
___ Other:_____ — 58)___ 59)___

BARRIERS - Situational

___ time pressures — 60)___
___ balancing multiple responsibilities — 61)___
___ financial difficulties — 62)___
___ health problems — 63)___
___ unavailability of child care — 64)___
___ transportation difficulties — 65)___
___ lack of encouragement from family or peers — 66)___
___ expected disruption of family life — 67)___
___ Other:_____ — 68)___ 69)___

BARRIERS - Personal

___ lack of motivation — 70)___
___ lack of confidence — 71)___
___ expected feeling of isolation (would not know anybody) — 72)___
___ concern about academic competence (writing exams, essays) — 73)___
___ Other:_____ — 74)___ 75)___

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.
PLEASE MAIL IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED.

APPENDIX C

SUBMISSIONS

Written submissions to the Task Force on Mature Students were received from the following:

Students and Student Associations

Joan A. Beger

C.M.R. Chapor

Canadian Organization of Part-Time University Students (COPUS)

COPUS, Alberta Branch

The Graduate Student Association, University of Alberta

John Hanlon

Dennis E. Huss

Faculty of Library Science Student Association, University of Alberta

Pembina Hall Student Association

L. Prins

Students' Union, University of Alberta

General Community

Alberta Advanced Education

Alberta Vocational Centre (Academic Division)

D. E. Chapman

Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

Fairview College

Options For Women

Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired

University Women's Club

Written Submissions to the Task Force on Mature Students were received from the following:

Faculty Members, University of Alberta

D. Badir, Faculty of Home Economics

R. L. Busch, Department of Slavic and East European Studies

P. J. Cahill, Department of Religious Studies

P. Freeman, Chief Librarian and Director of Libraries

M. Jendyk, Faculty of Arts

J. C. Kerr, Faculty of Nursing

L. C. Leitch, Vice President (Finance and Administration)

T. A. Petersen, Department of Rural Economy

H. W. Roberts, Faculty of Extension

L. G. Stephens-Newsham, Faculty of Pharmacy

S. L. Susut, Co-ordinator, Women's Programs, Faculty of Extension

C. Urion, Advisor on Native Affairs

A. A. Warrack and P. Winters, Faculty of Business

D. W. S. Westlake, Department of Microbiology